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GENERAL

1. Indian Prime Minister takes personal interest in Moroccan situation:

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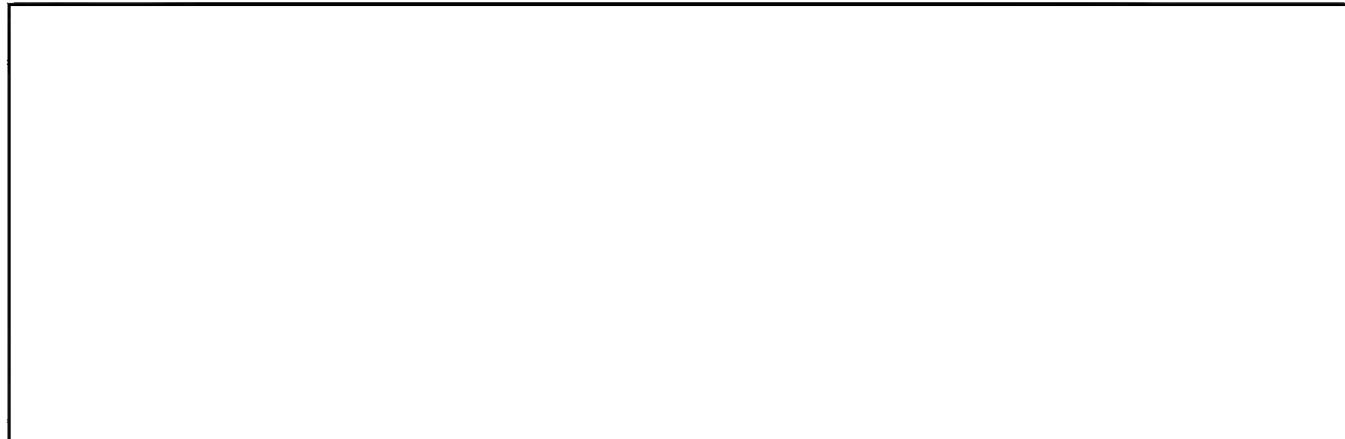
On 12 March, an official of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs read to US Ambassador Henderson portions of a private message from Prime Minister Nehru to the

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French Government in which Nehru expressed the hope that France would take appropriate steps to ensure the eventual independence of Morocco. The official stated that the Syrian Minister and the Indian Charge in Baghdad had suggested the move and that the governments of the Arab countries had been confidentially informed of Nehru's action. According to Ambassador Henderson, Nehru wrote in most friendly terms, although he displayed sympathy for the Moroccans and other North African nationals. The Ambassador believes that Nehru's new interest in North Africa has been stimulated by a desire to strengthen his influence in Arab countries of the Middle East.

Comment: It is doubtful that Nehru's message will have much effect on the French in view of French sensitivity to external interference and the antagonism raised by Nehru's earlier outspoken criticisms of colonialism in Indochina. On the other hand, the message may improve India's position in the eyes of those Arab nations which opposed Indian recognition of the state of Israel last September.

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3. French obstructing ECA program in Indochina:

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After more than a month's study, French Economic Counselor Penavaire, an old-line "colonialist" in General de Lattre's High Commissariat who reportedly holds a narrow concept of Vietnamese independence and is suspicious of US aims in Indochina, is delaying the conclusion of bilateral aid agreements between the US and the three Associated States of Indochina. Acting under authority based on the Franco-Vietnamese agreements of 8 March 1949, Penavaire has proposed amendments to the text worked out by US and Vietnamese representatives that are in almost every case identical with those previously either deleted or rejected by US negotiators. In reporting this French action, Indochina ECA Chief Blum observes that such French intransigence can only reinforce the Asian belief that the Associated States are far from being independent of France.

Comment: The fact that General de Lattre himself has recently expressed suspicions of ECA activities in Indochina suggests that Penavaire's attitude reflects more than the private view of one isolated French official.

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WESTERN EUROPE

4. Communist strength in Austrian police force revealed:

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An investigation of Communist strength in the Austrian police force

has revealed that the Interior Minister's policy of gradually weeding out Communists (appointed in large numbers under Austria's provisional government in 1945) has been much less effective than responsible police officials have suggested.

Comment: This investigation will afford, for the first time, a comprehensive picture of the composition of the police. According to an unofficial press report, 50% of the administrative police, 33% of the secret police and 20% of the regular police voted the Communist ticket in the police union elections. Discontent with economic conditions and with the government can only in small part explain this unexpectedly large pro-Communist vote. Although the investigation may result in forcing Austrian officials to make greater efforts to remove or counteract Communist influence in the police, civil service laws and the fear of Soviet retaliation will continue to hamper these efforts.

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